



Public Involvement and Participation Process

**A procedural policy developed
by:**

**Wood-Washington-Wirt
Interstate Planning
Commission**

In cooperation with:

**Federal Transit Administration
Federal Highway Administration
Ohio Department of Transportation
West Virginia Department of Transportation**

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT/PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission

(Revised: June 2006)

The following process and procedure is established to fulfill public participation and comment requirements for all transportation plans and transportation improvement programs developed by WWW. This procedure supersedes any previously approved process developed by the Interstate Planning Commission. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU planning provisions WWW is modifying existing public involvement/participation procedures so that citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties have a reasonable notice of and opportunity to comment on proposed plans and programs. As part of the metropolitan transportation planning process a proactive process has been developed which provides for "complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and programs". Specific planning requirements in the development of a public involvement process are as follows:

- A minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised.
- Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to all interested parties affected by transportation plans, programs and projects within the MPO area.
- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and TIPs and open meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered.
- Require adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to, approval of plans and TIPs.
- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes.
- Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households.
- When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan or TIP (including the financial plan) as a result of the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process required under the U.S. EPA's conformity regulations, a

summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of the comments shall be made part of the final plan and TIP.

- If the final transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or TIP shall be made available.
- Public involvement process shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all.
- These procedures will be reviewed by the FHWA and FTA as necessary for all MPOs, to assure that full and open access is provided to the MPO decision making processes.
- Metropolitan public involvement processes shall be coordinated with statewide public involvement processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs.

Utilizing the above referenced planning requirements WWW has developed specific procedures to insure full accessibility to all technical information during the development of plans and TIPs. The following procedure is established to fulfill these requirements:

I. Public Participation Process

- A. Prior to the development of the draft TIP and Long Range Transportation Plan a notice will be placed in the local newspapers requesting input and/or participation in the development of the documents. The notice will state the nature of the request with an input period of thirty (30) days from the date the notice was published. All comments and/or suggestions received will be documented and included in the preparation of the preliminary documents.
- B. (1) Upon completion of a draft Long Range Plan a public notice will be placed in the local newspapers stating that a preliminary document has been prepared. The notice will be published 15 days prior to a scheduled public meeting/"open house" and will state the date, times and place the document will be available for comment. The notice will also state that WWW will accept written comments up to 15 days after the scheduled public meeting/"open house". All comments and responses to comments will be made part of the planning documentation.
- (2) Upon completion of the draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) a public notice will be placed in the local newspapers stating that the preliminary document has been prepared and is available for public review and comment. The comment period will be thirty days from the date the

notice was published. The notice will state the times and place the public can review the document. Any comments received during this period will be documented with appropriate response and made part of the planning document.

- C. (1) Upon completion of the final draft Long Range Transportation Plan a public notice will be placed in the local newspapers stating that a final draft document has been prepared. The notice will be published 10 days prior to the scheduled public meeting/"open house" and will state the date, times and place the document to be available for comment. Any comments received during the meetings will be documented with a response and made part of the final document.
- (2) Upon completion of the final draft TIP a public notice will be placed in the local newspapers stating that the final draft TIP has been prepared and is available for public review and comment. The comment period will be 15 days from the date the notice was published. The notice will state the times and place the public can review the document. Any comments received will be taken into consideration prior to adoption of the final document.
- D. Upon completion of the final documents with explicit consideration given to all comments generated during the comment period, the WWW Policy Board will be requested to approve the documents by resolution at a Board meeting. The resolution will include an assurance that the Public Participation Policy was followed.

II. Additional Procedures

- 1. In addition to public notice in the local newspapers a mailing list of all known interested parties (Stakeholders) will be maintained by WWW staff. The list will include the WWW Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee, private providers of transportation, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, social service agencies (particularly those that serve low-income and minority population), and environmental resource agencies. Persons or agencies on this list will be notified directly of any requests for comments. Additionally, all public notices and documents requiring opportunities for public review will be placed on the agency web site at www.triplew.org.
- 2. The specified procedures in Section I allow WWW to meet the basic public input requirements. Any additional requirements identified by the State of Ohio or West Virginia will be followed and when possible coordinated with the states' public involvement processes.

3. All WWW Quarterly Board meetings will be considered open meetings and will be advertised 15 days prior to the meeting. This is to insure that the public has an opportunity to be informed on matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs.
4. If any comments are received during the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process required under the US EPA's conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of the comments will be made part of the final plan and TIP.
5. On an annual basis WWW will review this policy to assure that the process provides full and open access to all. If any modifications are required, the revisions will be subject to a 45 day comment period prior to WWW Policy Board approval.
6. In the event that modifications are required to the transportation plan or TIP as a result of new material issues, the revised document will be subject to the public involvement process as identified in C (1) and (2) of Section I.
7. Any public meeting/workshop associated with the development of the long range transportation plan or Transportation Improvement Program will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times. Meeting notices will be placed in local newspapers, mailed directly to stakeholders, as well as posted on the WWW web site.
8. Information provided for public comment will be in a format that is easy to understand and employ visualization techniques to illustrate plans and programs when applicable.
9. All documents prepared for public comment will be made available in electronic format. Draft and final documents will be accessible at www.triplew.org

III. Consultation

In addition to the solicitation of input from the general public WWW will maintain a list of resource agencies in order to incorporate and expand consultation requirements with appropriate state and local agencies responsible land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation during the transportation plan development process. Consultation efforts will begin early in the plan development process in order to identify any issue that needs to be addressed during the process. In addition to this consultation effort, resource agencies will be given

direct notification of opportunity to comment on the transportation plan in accordance with the procedures established under this policy.

IV. Interagency Coordination

An interagency consultation process will be maintained with Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, West Virginia Division of Air Quality, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, West Virginia Department of Transportation and Ohio Department of Transportation on all matters related to air quality conformity. Although procedural issues and methodologies are determined through the interagency consultation process, resulting conformity determinations are subject to the Public Participation Procedures as established in Section I.

V. Environmental Justice

In an effort to insure “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies”; WWW has developed and maintains an Environmental Justice assessment report based on the latest census information available for the region. The report identifies and locates target minority and low-income population groups in order to assist in the evaluation and assessment of any disproportionately high and adverse affects caused by any plan or program developed by WWW. In addition to the standard methods of public notification, WWW outreach efforts include contact with social service agencies that provide assistance to the target population groups to encourage input and participation in the planning process. This effort is made throughout the process and in accordance with Section I of this policy.